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LETTER DATED 9 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic vis-à-vis Security Council document S/1998/44, dated 9 January 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mikhail WEHBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 9 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to document S/1998/44 of 9 January 1998 concerning the deletion of certain items from the list of matters of which the Security Council is currently seized, I wish to make the following observations:

1. On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is strongly opposed to the deletion of item 29, entitled "Letter dated 4 February 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17787)", since the letter in question refers to irrefutable evidence that Israel engages in State terrorism and flouts the will of the international community, which is opposed to such terrorism and wages an ongoing struggle against policies of this kind.

2. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is equally opposed to the deletion of items 1 ("The Palestine question"), 17 ("The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question") and 20 ("The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights"). These items are extremely important, especially since the present Israeli Government is completely ignoring United Nations resolutions, the principle of "land for peace" and the will of the international community, and the question of Palestine falls entirely within the jurisdiction of the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is highly regrettable that the Security Council has not considered the above matters because of opposition from the United States of America, which refuses to allow these matters to be discussed on the pretext that talks are currently ongoing between the parties in the context of the peace process.

3. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates the position expressed in its earlier letter, dated 26 August 1996, namely, that the retention of items on the list for just one year is an unacceptable rule which was adopted without prior consultation with the Member States of the United Nations, who were confronted with a fait accompli following a decision which they did not take on an issue on which they were not consulted. What is more, the selective deletion of items which the Security Council has not considered in formal meetings during the preceding five-year period is a serious departure from the manner in which the Security Council should, ideally, consider certain important issues.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic believes that the Security Council's task goes well beyond simplifying the list of matters of which it is seized or deleting certain items from it, and calls upon the Council to reconsider its decision in the interests of international peace and security.

(Signed) Mikhail WEHBE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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